

Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Peter Jensen
Kim Walesh

SUBJECT: Mexican Heritage Plaza Transition

DATE: June 12, 2008

Approved: Paul Kuth Date: 6-12-08

COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 5

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the staff report updating the Committee on the transition plan for the Mexican Heritage Plaza.

BACKGROUND

On March 18, 2008 Council approved item 3.6, Actions Related To The Mexican Heritage Plaza, Including Mexican Heritage Corporation. Included in this action were 5 recommendations from staff and 12 additional recommendations contained in a memo from Mayor Reed and Councilmember Campos, aimed at achieving the vision for the Mexican Heritage Plaza as a Community Arts and Cultural Center with a new non-profit model. The staff memo included the following desired outcomes:

- Development of a new management future for Mexican Heritage Plaza,
- Stabilize and transition the facility management to the City so it continues to be accessible to the community,
- Provide support to encourage the transition of Mexican Heritage Corporation into a new role as they work to stabilize their financial standing, and
- Provide marketing support to assist the 2008 Mariachi Festival.

In addition, the memo from Mayor Reed and Councilmember Campos cited the following goals for the Plaza:

- Reconnecting with the community by ensuring that the Plaza is grounded within the community and extends beyond the Plaza's walls
- Establishing a Board that is reflective of all stakeholders
- Remaining transparent and accountable, and
- Developing a business plan that is self-sustaining.

Staff submitted a memo suggesting a revised implementation plan to achieve these results for the Committee's consideration at its May 27 meeting. The Committee approved the plan, and asked staff to report back in June on progress toward the selection of an Independent Convening Institution. The Independent Convening Institution would work with the Steering Committee members to develop a business plan to make the Plaza a sustaining community cultural center.

ANALYSIS

Independent Convening Institution

At the May 27 meeting, staff described a process for recommending selection of an Independent Convening Institution which involved asking consistent questions of potential Independent Convening Institutions, and explaining the Council's direction that the role involves no compensation and precludes the organization from having any role in the eventual outcome. Criteria used to determine which organizations to contact were established by Council at its March 18 meeting: the organization should be community based, culturally competent, and have philanthropic experience.

At the time this memo was written, not all conversations have been successfully completed, so the memo reflects the status as of June 12. If, as we expect, more information becomes available prior to the Committee's June 23 meeting, a supplemental memo will be provided in order to convey that information. The results of discussions held to date are as follows:

- **Hispanic Foundation Silicon Valley** – The Hispanic Foundation expressed interest in the role and viewed the role as consistent with their mission of developing Latino philanthropy and leadership. The Foundation understands the conditions of no compensation and no future role in the Plaza. The Foundation is working with potential partners to secure financial commitments and, if successful, expects to provide a written expression of interest shortly. Hewlett Foundation is a potential partner, as is Silicon Valley Community Foundation and perhaps others.
- **Castellano Family Foundation** – The Castellano Family Foundation cannot play the role of Independent Convening Institution, but is willing to discuss some financial support for the business planning process and other assistance as needed.
- **Other Organizations** – A number of other organizations, although not primarily philanthropic, are interested in the success of the Mexican Heritage Plaza, including MACSA, MACLA, and 1stACT Silicon Valley. For various reasons, none of these organizations are interested in serving as the Independent Convening Institution. Staff feels it is important to keep all of these organizations informed and involved as the process continues.

As mentioned above, staff expects to have more information soon, which will be included in a supplemental memorandum to the Committee. If there is sufficient information to make a recommendation as to selection of an Independent Convening Institution at that time, one will be made as part of the memo.

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Other Issues

Staff is working to improve the City's Mexican Heritage Plaza web pages, and expects to complete these improvements prior to the Committee meeting. Key elements to be added include:


- On-line form to pledge membership to the Plaza
- On-line form to nominate someone to the Plaza Steering Committee
- Information on community meetings, consultant reports, and Council and Committee meetings that have been completed to date regarding the Plaza

In the future, we hope to create the ability to complete elements of the event booking process on line, possibly including payment for events services. We are also considering the creation of a virtual tour of the Plaza aimed at those considering booking a meeting or event at the Plaza.

Preliminary discussions with each of the Resident Arts Partners (RAP's) regarding lease and event rates have been completed, and staff is working to create draft lease agreements. While the structure of these rates has been changed, the overall effect for the RAP's is negligible, and the discussions have been very positive. We expect to complete the lease agreements within the next month.

FOLLOW-UP

Staff will report on further implementation progress in a CED Committee report in August along with an Informational Memo to Council. Further informational reports, as well as recommendations at needed decision points will be provided according to the timeline. Should any elements of this timeline need to be delayed, staff will ask for the Committee's approval as part of upcoming status reports.


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For questions please contact Peter Jensen, General Services Director, at 975-7290.